

The Ames Intelligencer

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Competing Editors Lock Horns; One Wins And One Loses

By Farwell T. Brown

"When a newcomer goes to you and represents his business as equal to (that of his long-established) neighbor's, put him down as a champion liar..."

In the 1880s, going into competition with an established newspaper run by a veteran country editor could be a hazardous undertaking. Such a melodrama occurred in Ames in the year 1886. What happened could have been predicted when two newspaper editors went after the same patrons in such a small village as Ames. However, while fairly typical of goings-on between competing editors of that day, it had a tragic ending that was not anticipated by most of the participants or bystanders at the time.

It started on a cold day during the winter of 1885. John Duncan had been a newspaperman in Wisconsin before coming to Ames in 1882. Duncan, about 50 years of age, was the veteran editor of the *Ames Intelligencer*. His shop was located on the south side of Main Street near the Kellogg corner. E. W. Clark, in early 1885, had come to Ames from Illinois to start a competing paper known as the *Monitor*. Clark's shop was also on the south side of Main Street, midway between Kellogg and Douglas Avenues. Both papers were weekly publications.

Duncan had been secure in his position as publisher and editor of Ames' first and only newspaper. Clark was young, inexperienced, and ambitious when he established himself and his paper. He had some influential backing for his enterprise in the little village, including Captain Wallace M. Greeley.

Duncan was not pleased, and he

had plenty to say about Clark. "No one has such a high estimation of his calling and dignity and brains and character as a new-fledged editor," Duncan wrote at one point, referring to "the imported genius who did the heavy editorial act in the Baby Bumble Bee the last few weeks..." Everyone soon knew that Duncan was referring to Clark and the *Monitor* when he frequently mentioned the "Bumble Bee" in his editorials.

Duncan probably considered himself to be the "Mr. Republican" of the community, and, certainly, he considered the *Intelligencer* to be the official newspaper for the Republican Party interests in the Ames area. When Clark picked "The Only Live Republican Paper in Story County" as his slogan, he threw coal oil on Duncan's fire.

It was in December when one of Duncan's men looked out of the south window of the *Intelligencer* shop and saw Will Reynolds, the "printer's devil" who worked for the *Monitor*, picking up coal along the Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks. The young man, according to Duncan, seeing no one in sight, climbed up on a coal car, filled his bucket, and hastily returned to the *Monitor* shop.

The coal bucket scene on that cold December day gave Duncan the perfect opportunity to retaliate. His next editorial dealt with the incident explicitly. Added to his characterization of Clark as a liar, Duncan now advertised the fact that Clark was also a thief. "It is alleged on the street that the *Monitor* outfit has been making free with other people's fuel," Duncan stated in his paper.

Clark sought the counsel of the law firm of Turner and Smith. Cyrus Turner, 66 years of age at the time, had practiced law in Ames and Nevada since 1869 and continued until early 1891 when he retired at the age of 71. It was Turner who had written the centennial history of Ames in 1876 during the centennial year of our nation.

Duncan soon received notice of suit for libel. The notice read, in part, "That at the time hereinafter mentioned, the defendant, J. E. Duncan, was the editor, publisher and proprietor of the *Ames Intelligencer*, a newspaper published in Ames, Story County, Iowa.

"That the defendant intended to be understood by the above described to accuse the plaintiff of being 'champion liar and coal thief' and was so understood by those members of the public who read said publications in the newspaper aforesaid."

Clark claimed injury to his business and his character in the amount of \$3,000, plus costs.

Duncan's editorial of January 28, 1886 quoted the plaintiff's bill of particulars in detail, referring to it as the "Baby's Whine." "Our Baby Calf Bumble Bee is not so much after 'character' as 'filthy lucre' to replenish his exchequer," the editorial said. For whatever reasons, Clark and his *Monitor* were struggling for existence by this time, and Duncan made the most of the situation.

"When an individual moves from one locality to another, it is always prudent not to forget his character," Duncan wrote. "Our contemporary . . . of the *Monitor* left his native

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sands on the Illinois River in such haste that he forgot his 'karractor' ..."

Duncan's editorial remarks continued to poke rather sharp jabs at Clark and the situation in general. At one point, Duncan hinted that the railroad might bring charges for the loss attended by the "free hand drawing of carbon." And Duncan frequently stated that the "Baby Bumble Bee went up in a rocket and came down on a stick."

No copies or records of the *Monitor* are known to exist today. The only source for Clark's side of the argument, both in and out of court, are based on a combination of what Duncan reported in the *Intelligencer* and the comments made by Clark's attorney in the *Nevada Watchman*.

The case was tried in District Court in March 1886. Duncan was represented by George Underwood, another well-known and capable Ames lawyer of the day. Clark's witnesses were primarily three prominent Ames businessmen, Captain Wallace Greeley, Parley Sheldon, and L. Q. Hoggatt. He could hardly have had better support.

Witnesses for Duncan included Mrs. Giles Cook and her husband, the owners of the lumber yard adjacent to the *Intelligencer* office. Their testimony supported the charge that *Monitor* people had been seen picking up coal along the railroad tracks, even from a coal car on the siding.

The court found for the plaintiff Clark. Duncan was found guilty of the charge of libel, but the damage award was not the \$3,000 requested. Instead, the award was exactly one dollar.

Duncan sharpened his pencil again. This time, his editorial dealt with Clark's "one dollar character." The court had spoken, he implied, so

now the citizens of Ames knew what Clark's character was worth. You would think that Duncan, not Clark, had won. Duncan gave it nearly three columns on the front page of the March 4, 1886 issue of the *Intelligencer*. He reported much of the testimony of his own witnesses. He identified the plaintiff's witnesses, but not their testimony. One of them, he wrote, was so drunk that the judge should have cited him for contempt. (Duncan never identified the drunk witness.) Before he finished the editorial, Duncan had practically repeated all of the allegations that had brought on the squabble in the first place.

Duncan, however, didn't get the last word. The *Nevada Watchman*, commenting on the verdict, said that, "According to the jury in the recent libel case from Ames, the character of an editor is worth one dollar - that is a cruel joke on the fraternity at large. Better keep out of a court of law at such figures."

In the March 12, 1886 issue of the *Nevada Watchman*, Clark's lawyer, Cyrus Turner, presented a strong rebuttal to Duncan's editorial of March 4. Clark's character had been vindicated, Turner contended, and the allegations made by Duncan in his paper were unsupported. "The citizens of Ames and vicinity might object that this case had been concluded by a jury and the judgment of the court... and should be permitted to rest." But Duncan's post-trial article of "a tissue of false assumption and forced conclusions" called for clarification, Turner wrote.

Clark's attorneys had asked the jury for the vindication of Clark and that he be cleared of all false charges. According to Turner, they had not, in fact, asked damages in their final pleas. Turner stated that word from a jury spokesman following the trial indicated that they

had not been impressed with Duncan's testimony under oath. As for the one dollar in assessed damages, Turner stated that was the jury's estimate of the value they placed on Duncan's opinion of the man. After all, Duncan had stated that he didn't really believe his victim was a thief. It was only that he "could not refrain from sticking a pin into (Clark's) tender vesicle," suggesting that Clark was just too sensitive.

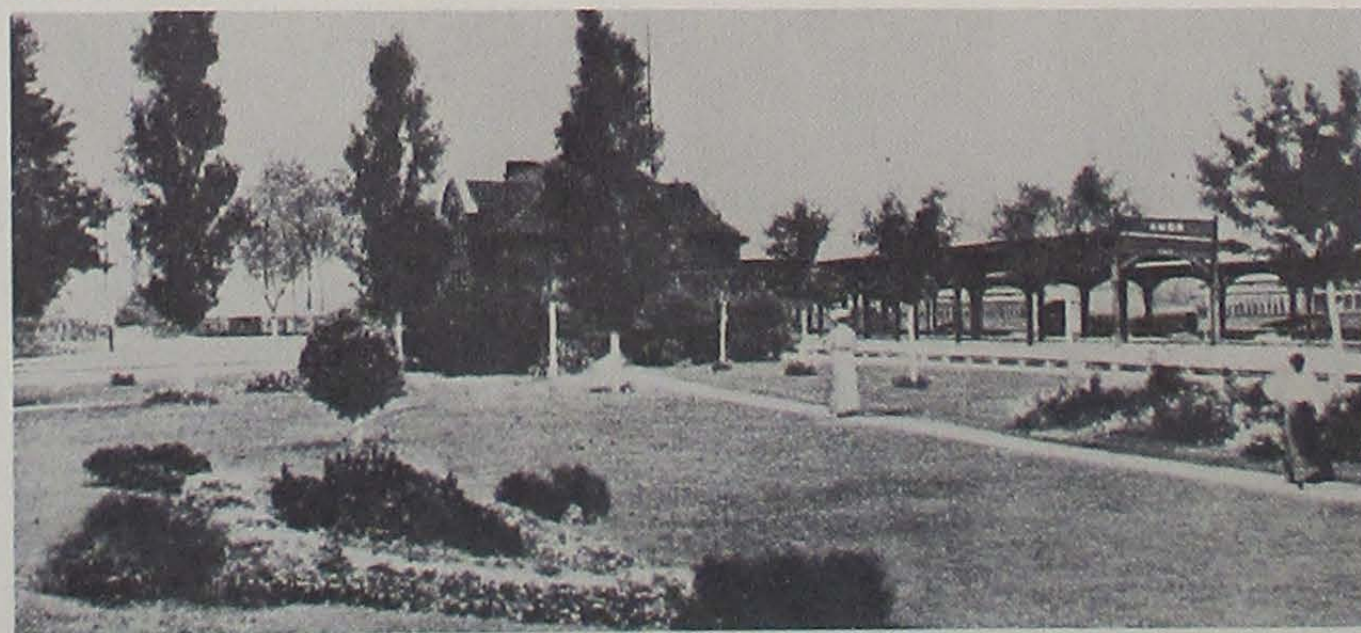
Also, Duncan had called Turner a "blackmailer" in one of his *Intelligencer* editorials, but could not support that in court either. Turner reported that the jury did not think Duncan's opinion carried the kind of credibility to be damaging. But he had been told that the jury was unanimous in believing that Duncan had libeled Clark.

Turner's main concern seemed to be for compassion for the younger man. "For weeks poor Clark, in a weak condition of health, had borne up under a mental strain as would have prostrated many men of greater physical strength, with only the consciousness of his innocence to sustain him," Turner wrote in the *Nevada Watchman*. "The trial is over, and Clark made happy by his vindication... Let him begin a new life."

The case, unfortunately, had been tried in the press both before and after it had been tried in court.

Poor Clark apparently suffered great anxiety throughout the experience. It turned out that his health made a turn for the worse and, later that same month, on March 26, 1886, Clark died at the age of 30 from tuberculosis, then known as consumption. Not long after his passing, the *Monitor* ceased publication.

In the end, the sharp-tongued, outspoken Duncan once again held the position of having the only newspaper in Ames. □



This 1908 view of the Chicago and Northwestern Depot in downtown Ames shows the park-like landscaped grounds in front of the busy train station. This area is now a parking lot for the city hall annex at the old depot building.

"Magnificent New Train Station" Opened 87 Years Ago

By Ellen Landon

"New Passenger Station

The Magnificent New Passenger Station at Ames Almost Completed. The Old Shed that has Served for a Depot Since the Advent of the Railroad into Ames Soon to be a Thing of the Past."

The headline in the September 4, 1900 issue of the *Ames Times* heralded the opening of a brand-new railroad depot nearly 87 years ago. That building, constructed at Main and Clark, still stands today and is in daily use by several administrative divisions of the City of Ames. It's a building with a past... and perhaps a future!

In the words of that early *Ames Times* reporter of 1900, "The new passenger station of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad will be ready for occupancy about the middle of October. Then the old one-story shed that has so inadequately served the purpose and passed under the name of depot since the time when 'Heck was a pup' will be a thing of the past..."

The reporter told about the new depot's lunchroom that would be "a thing of beauty and a joy forever to the traveling public." The reporter continued, "It will be a haven of rest for the weary traveler where he can wash and rest while replenishing

the inner man with a short order or long order, prepared under the supervision of that prince of caterers, C. R. Quade."

Thelma Nowlin, who lives in Ames today, remembers when she was a little girl and her mother took her on many a special outing to the depot to watch the trains come in and to eat at the new Northwestern Depot Restaurant. She says the food was excellent, at least in part to Mr. Quade's wife's pies which made this eating place a favorite spot for Ames residents, college students, and travelers.

John W. Sandort, a former Ames resident who works for the Federal Department of Transportation and who has provided Ames historian Farwell Brown with information about the local depot, says that the new Ames station, at that time, was one of the most impressive stations between Clinton and Council Bluffs and provided a sort of hub for rail passenger traffic.

According to Farwell Brown, there were 24 to 26 passenger trains a day at the peak of operation, and a subway under the tracks was built about 1920 to facilitate passenger flow. The local station was one of several Chicago and Northwestern stations remodeled after World War II as new streamliner trains were

put into service. Refurbishing the Ames station cost \$100,000, three times the original construction cost of \$30,000.

It's said the grounds looked like a park because the area in front of the depot was landscaped so carefully. However, rail traffic declined, and the area in front of the depot was sold to the city about 1951 to be converted into a parking lot. Passenger train service stopped about 1956.

In 1971, the city bought the vacant station and remodeled it to expand city offices. At the present time, the Finance and Personnel Departments, as well as the Inspection Division of the Fire Department are housed in the old depot building.

Back in 1900, the *Ames Times* reporter commented that the first depot, the "old shed" on Duff Avenue, had become a thing of the past. Now, with talk of consolidated city hall facilities, possible re-routing of Amtrak, and revived need for a depot, as well as historical preservation possibilities for the aging structure, Ames residents might well wonder if the 87-year-old depot will continue to add to Ames' history - or if it will become a building of the past. □

Closing Chapter In The Jack Trice Story

By Farwell T. Brown

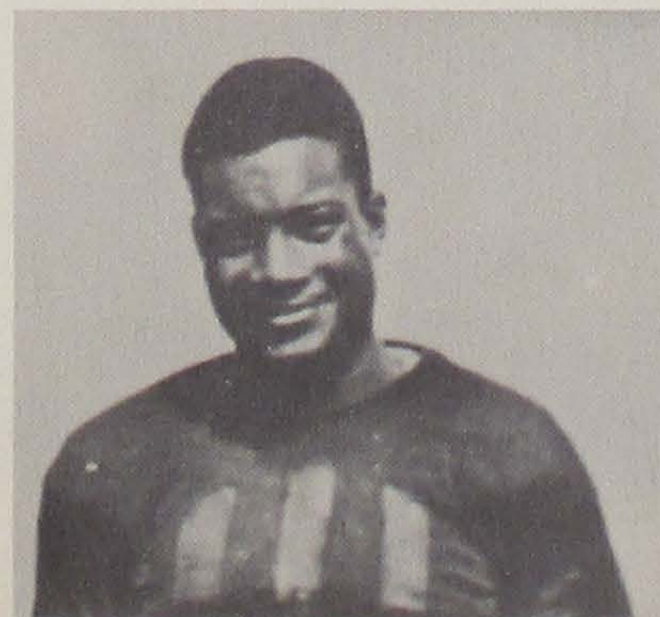
A front-page story in the *Ames Tribune* on January 3, 1924 marked "the closing chapter in the story of the death of Jack Trice, Iowa State football player, in the fall of 1923" with "payment of a small mortgage" and presentation of the balance of a special fund set up for Trice's widow and mother. The current chapter in that same story has been the naming, in 1983, of Iowa State's football field in the memory of Trice, who suffered a fatal injury in a 1923 football game. However, in 1924, the *Tribune* account represented what then appeared to be the final word on the community's response to the tragic event.

In 1923, an appeal was made to the general public for contributions to aid the widow of Jack Trice and his mother, Mrs. Anna W. Trice, of Ravenna, Ohio. Mrs. Trice had negotiated a mortgage of several hundred dollars on her small home

to make it possible for Jack to attend Iowa State College. Professor William H. Pew, who had been head of the Animal Husbandry Department at Iowa State and who had located by that time in Ohio near the Trice family, administered the fund. After paying off the mortgage and funeral expenses, the balance of \$1,160 was divided equally between Mrs. Trice and Jack's wife, Cora Mae.

The Iowa State Athletic Council soon after announced that it would award an honorary letter "A" to Trice. A published excerpt from a letter written by Jack's mother acknowledged the recognition accorded to her son following his tragic death. "I sincerely thank you for the many kind expressions of good will for the memory of my son," Mrs. Trice wrote. "If John had lived, the athletic association of Ames would have always had a warm spot in his heart.

"The spirit in awarding him his 'A' is wonderful," Mrs. Trice continued. "I am asking his wife to let me keep it during my lifetime. It is sacred." □



The death of Jack Trice in the fall of 1923 following an Iowa State football game was a tragic event which stirred the Ames and college community to compassion and action.

Captain Greeley's Gift To Ames Lives On

By Farwell T. Brown

Captain Wallace M. Greeley, founder and donor of the original wing of the Mary Greeley Hospital, was born on a farm in Orleans County, New York in 1838 to hard-working farm people. Growing up on a New York farm, educated in the common school of his day, Greeley soon acquired the frugal habits and earnest ambitions that determined his direction in life.

Greeley began his career as a schoolmaster in New York. It was in Ellipticville, New York that he met Mary Victoria Young when both were attending a teachers' institute. They were married on November 8, 1866 in Gowanda, New York. Young Greeley had entered the Union Army as a volunteer in 1861 and, by the war's end, had attained the rank of major. He preferred, however, to be called "Captain" and was always referred to as Captain Greeley by his associates and friends.

Captain Wallace M. and Mary Greeley arrived in Ames in the spring of 1866 when the population of our town was but a few hundred inhabitants. Captain Greeley's capital when he arrived in Ames consisted of his Union Army pay received during the four war years which he had religiously sent home to his father for safekeeping. Captain Greeley first purchased a farm a short distance south of Ames where he and Mary farmed until 1876 when the Greeleys purchased a home on the west side of Douglas Avenue at the Eleventh Street corner. In 1882, they built the home

that is today the Adams Funeral Home.

Captain Greeley's interests drew him to the banking business. In 1881, he founded the Union Bank, the first corporate bank in Ames. His great loyalty to the cause of the Union Army of 1861-65 is said to have been the cause of his selecting the name "Union" for his bank which has become the present-day United Bank and Trust of Ames.

Captain Wallace M. Greeley did much for the developing city of Ames. His contributions were often of a less-than-visible nature. Many a vital cause received his support at a critical moment. He also served as mayor of Ames from 1888-90. Always promoting education, he served on the Ames School Board and, together with his wife Mary, donated the original site for the Ames Public Library. He served three terms in the Iowa Legislature where his knowledge and experience were highly respected.

The Greeleys lost their two children in infancy, and, when Mary Greeley's death occurred in 1914, it became Captain Greeley's great desire to see a hospital built in Ames. On July 29, 1915, he announced his plan to build that hospital. He relied on expert consultants and local physicians to select the site at Twelfth Street and Douglas Avenue, one that they felt offered room for future expansion.

Plans for the hospital were drawn by the architectural firm of Liebbe, Nourse, and Rasmussen of Des Moines. Bids were opened on De-

cember 20, 1915, with the contract going to the Arthur Newman Company of Des Moines, the same contractor which was then also building the Collegiate Presbyterian Church near the Iowa State College campus. On December 29, 1915, site preparations were begun.

On September 24, 1916, the Mary Greeley Memorial Hospital was dedicated. Nearly 2,000 people were said to have been present when Captain Greeley spoke with feeling about how the hospital represented the affection that Mary Greeley held for the Ames community. "It affords me great pleasure," Captain Greeley spoke, "more than words can express, that I can contribute something towards the welfare of not only those now in need, but also for those who will be here long after we have passed away."

Captain Wallace M. Greeley died on February 4, 1917, leaving much evidence of his long-held interest in the welfare and development of our city.

Captain Greeley was a second cousin of the famous New York editor, Horace Greeley (1811-1872). The Captain's youngest brother, Horace A. Greeley, was named after their famous cousin. The younger Horace Greeley also lived in Ames for many years, and his daughter, Blanche Greeley, married Charles A. Wilson of Ames. Wilson was associated with Greeley's banking business for a time. The Wilsons later lived in Chicago. □



Captain Wallace M. Greeley left a lasting memorial to his wife Mary when he dedicated the Mary Greeley Hospital in 1916 to "those who will be here long after we have passed away."

The Intelligencer

"The Weekly (Ames) Intelligencer, a live paper, was first published by Mr. A. McFadden, an experienced newspaper publisher and editor. Its first issue was about April 1868 - nineteen years ago - and is still being published. J.E. Duncan, Esq., is editor and proprietor, and gets up an excellent paper."

From the description of Ames' first newspaper in William G. Allen's History of Story County written in 1887 (page 232).

Riding the Dinkey's Rails

By Farwell T. Brown

It was "the most scenic passenger route in the State of Iowa," according to an advertisement for the Ames and College Railroad. "All the smoke and cinders that you will ever want," the ad continued. This picturesque, approximately-two-miles-long railroad running between the town of Ames and the campus of Iowa State College was better known to residents and students as the "Dinkey."

It was founded in 1892 when more reliable means of transportation between Ames and Iowa State College became necessary. Mud streets and roads separated downtown Ames and the campus. In fact, the little college was not even within the town of Ames in 1892. It was not until January 2, 1893 that the campus of Iowa State College was annexed into the corporate limits of town. It was almost 30 years later before all-weather street surfacing existed between the two areas. But, in 1892, Parley Sheldon, perennial mayor of Ames, saw the need for the railroad and was partly responsible for bringing the two "donkey" engines down from Waterloo with which to operate the standard gauge line.

Three blasts of the whistle blew at 6:00 a.m., and students living in town knew it was time to get down to one of the Dinkey's stops on Fifth Street. Always well-patronized, there were two passenger cars in use, usually filled to capacity during the busy hours of the day. The five-cent fare was a bargain.

When the Fort Dodge and Southern Company purchased the line in 1907, the Dinkey's engines were replaced with electric trolleys. The tracks were moved from Fifth Street to Main Street. Later, the track that had crossed the central campus was re-routed around the campus and combined with the Interurban line from Des Moines. The town-to-campus fare remained five cents until 1925 when it became seven cents.

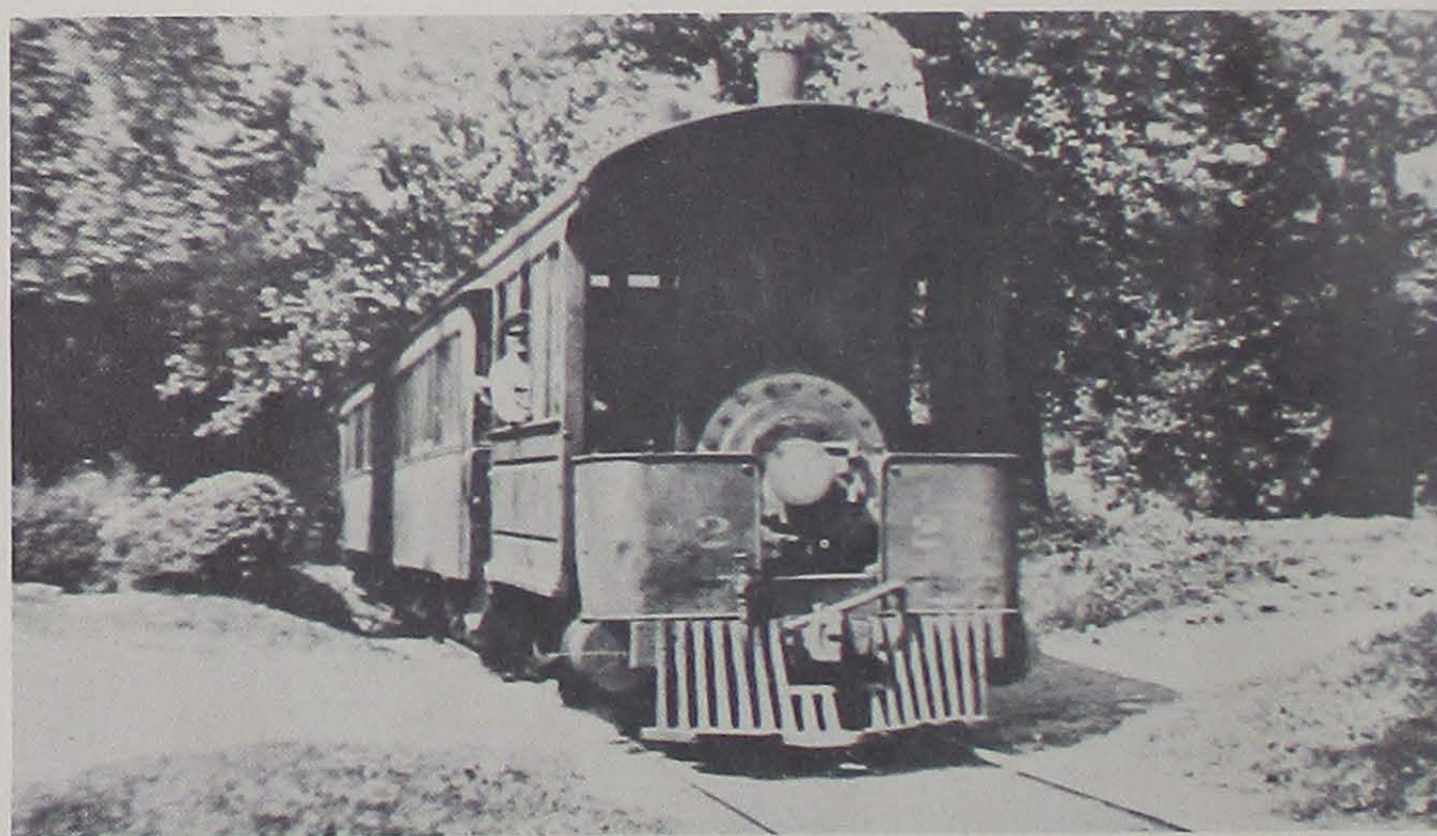
In 1929, the line petitioned to cease operations during the summer months. As it turned out, street car service never resumed, and the era

of busses began. But, for 15 years between 1892 and 1907, the Dinkey became an Iowa State tradition.

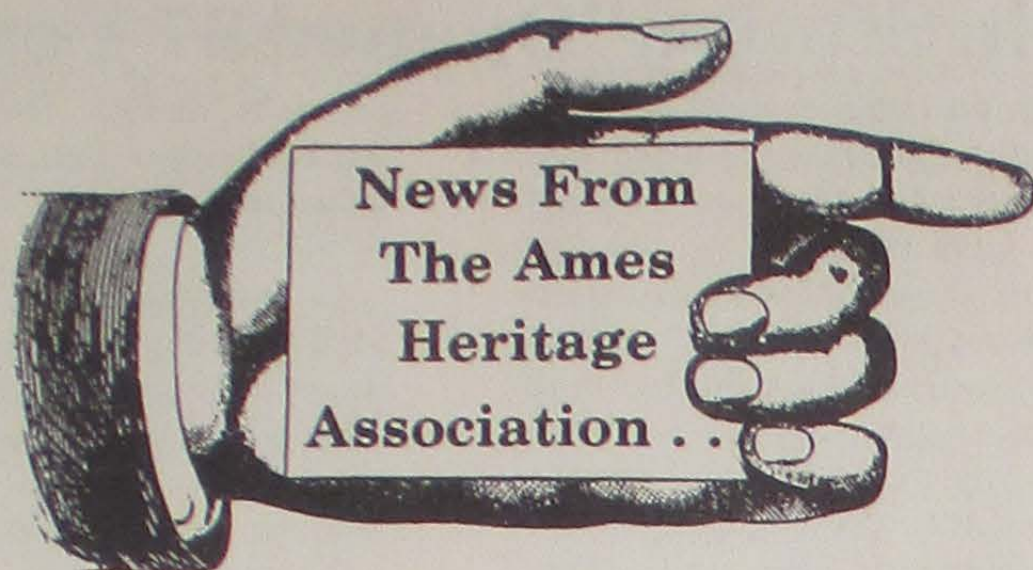
Those who could claim they had ridden the Dinkey were a select and proud group of people. □



The rolling stock of the Ames and College Railway, shown here in a circa 1920 photograph, was also known as the Dinkey. For a nickel a passenger, these "donkey" engines pulled two passenger cars between the town of Ames and the campus of Iowa State College when the college was in session.



"The most scenic passenger route in the State of Iowa," complete with smoke and cinders, makes its way between Ames and the campus in this photograph taken circa 1905.



During meetings of the Ames Heritage Association since the last newsletter, members:

- discussed placement and design of a marker at the Billy Sunday family cemetery;
- received membership reports (291 members as of January 1987);
- received treasurer's reports (\$2,342.57 balance as of March 1987);
- set up a task force to decide expenditure of the national Questor's \$1,000 grant for "outdoor education;"
- discussed placement of the Ames Depot on the National Register of Historic Places;
- discussed preparing a travelling

historical display; and

- received and voted on the slate of nominees for board members and officers for 1987.

Ames Heritage Association board members and officers for 1987 include: Lee Himan, President; Jack Adams, Vice-President; Jan Halverson, Treasurer; Sharon Wirth, Secretary; and board members Farwell Brown, Rodney Fox, Polly Gossard, Ruth Hamilton, Herb Hatch, Glen Holmes, Bertlyn Johnston, Charles Kniker, Marvin Miller, Mike Quinn, Mary Peale-Schofield, and Jay Cole Simser. The newsletter editor is Cecelia Burnett, and advisors include June Barnes, Claire Allen, and Shelly Boyd.

Representatives of the Ames Heritage Association attended a meeting in March to discuss working towards a local historic district ordinance. The meeting included members of the city staff, the Old Town Neighborhood Association, and Herb Gottfried of the Iowa State Architecture Department. Issues of concern to the drafting of the ordinance include: the review process for properties within the district; make-up and powers of a commission to oversee the ordinance; economic impact on the district area; and public awareness. The AHA will continue to be a part of this effort to establish an historic district ordinance for the City of Ames.

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The Ames Heritage Association meets the second Tuesday of every month (September through May) at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the Ames Public Library, 515 Douglas Avenue.

The annual meeting is held the second Tuesday of January. Time and place are announced.

The *Ames Intelligencer* is published three times a year - winter, spring, and fall.

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